

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

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1. An absorbent article, comprising:  
an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising hydrophobic fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising a binder and fibers selected from the group consisting of hydrophilic fibers, hydrophobic fibers, and mixtures thereof; and  
the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length.
2. The absorbent article of Claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic fibers comprise synthetic fibers.
3. The absorbent article of Claim 1, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.
4. The absorbent article of Claim 1, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.
5. The absorbent article of Claim 1, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.
6. An absorbent article, comprising:
  - (a) a liquid pervious topsheet;
  - (b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising hydrophobic fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising a binder and fibers selected from the group consisting of hydrophilic fibers, hydrophobic fibers, and mixtures thereof; and  
the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length; and

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15. The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the article is at least one of an infant diaper and an adult incontinence product.

16. An absorbent article, comprising:

- (a) a liquid pervious topsheet;
- (b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the first stratum comprising hydrophobic fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising a binder and fibers selected from the group consisting of hydrophilic fibers, hydrophobic fibers, and mixtures thereof; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

- (c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material;
- (d) an intermediate stratum interposed between the absorbent composite and the storage stratum; and
- (e) a liquid impervious backsheet.

17. The absorbent article of Claim 16, wherein the hydrophobic fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

18. The absorbent article of Claim 16, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

19. The absorbent article of Claim 16, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

<sup>5</sup>  
~~20.~~ The absorbent article of Claim <sup>1</sup>~~16~~, wherein the article is an adult incontinence product.

<sup>6</sup>  
~~21.~~ The absorbent article of Claim <sup>1</sup>~~16~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a liquid pervious tissue.

<sup>7</sup>  
~~22.~~ The absorbent article of Claim <sup>1</sup>~~16~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a distribution stratum.

<sup>8</sup> 23. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>7</sup> 22, wherein the distribution stratum comprises hydrophilic fibers and a binder.

<sup>Sub 16</sup> 24. The absorbent article of Claim 23, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

<sup>Sub 137</sup> 25. The absorbent article of Claim 23, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked eucalyptus fibers.

26. An absorbent article, comprising:  
an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising first fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising second fibers and a binder; and  
the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length.

27. The absorbent article of Claim 26, wherein the first fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

28. The absorbent article of Claim 26, wherein the second fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

<sup>Sub a7</sup> 29. The absorbent article of Claim 26, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

30. The absorbent article of Claim 26, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.

31. An absorbent article, comprising:  
(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;  
(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising first fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising second fibers and a binder; and

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39. The absorbent article of Claim 36, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

40. The absorbent article of Claim 36, wherein the article is at least one of an infant diaper and an adult incontinence product.

41. An absorbent article, comprising:

(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;

(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the first stratum comprising first fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising second fibers and a binder; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material;

(d) an intermediate stratum interposed between the absorbent composite and the storage stratum; and

(e) a liquid impervious backsheet.

<sup>12</sup>  
~~42~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>11</sup>~~41~~, wherein the first fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

<sup>13</sup>  
~~43~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>11</sup>~~41~~, wherein the second fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

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A10 > 44. The absorbent article of Claim 41, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

<sup>15</sup>  
~~45~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>11</sup>~~41~~, wherein the article is an adult incontinence product.

<sup>16</sup>  
~~46~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>11</sup>~~41~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a liquid pervious tissue.

<sup>17</sup>  
~~47~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>11</sup>~~41~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a distribution stratum.

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<sup>18</sup>  
~~48~~. The absorbent article of Claim ~~47~~<sup>17</sup>, wherein the distribution stratum comprises hydrophilic fibers and a binder.

<sup>19</sup>  
~~49~~. The absorbent article of Claim ~~48~~<sup>18</sup>, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

<sup>20</sup>  
~~50~~. The absorbent article of Claim ~~48~~<sup>18</sup>, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked eucalyptus fibers.

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51. An absorbent article, comprising:  
an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising synthetic fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising crosslinked cellulosic fibers and a binder; and  
the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length.

52. The absorbent article of Claim 51, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

53. The absorbent article of Claim 51, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.

54. An absorbent article, comprising:  
(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;  
(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;  
the first stratum comprising synthetic fibers and a binder;  
the second stratum comprising crosslinked cellulosic fibers and a binder; and  
the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length; and  
(c) a liquid impervious backsheet.

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(d) an intermediate stratum interposed between the absorbent composite and the storage stratum; and

(e) a liquid impervious backsheet.

61. The absorbent article of Claim 60, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

<sup>23</sup>/~~62~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>21</sup>/~~60~~, wherein the article is an adult incontinence product.

<sup>24</sup>/~~63~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>21</sup>/~~60~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a liquid pervious tissue.

<sup>25</sup>/~~64~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>21</sup>/~~60~~, wherein the intermediate stratum comprises a distribution stratum.

<sup>26</sup>/~~65~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>25</sup>/~~64~~, wherein the distribution stratum comprises hydrophilic fibers and a binder.

<sup>27</sup>/~~66~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>26</sup>/~~65~~, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

<sup>28</sup>/~~67~~. The absorbent article of Claim <sup>26</sup>/~~65~~, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked eucalyptus fibers.

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8. The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

9. The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

10. The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.

(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;

(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the second stratum comprising a binder and fibers selected from the group consisting of hydrophilic fibers, hydrophobic fibers, and mixtures thereof; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material;

(d) a liquid impervious backsheet.

12. The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the hydrophobic fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

13. The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the hydrophilic fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

14. The absorbent article of Claim 11, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length; and

(c) a liquid impervious backsheet.

32. The absorbent article of Claim 31, wherein the first fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

33. The absorbent article of Claim 31, wherein the second fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

sub 48) 34. The absorbent article of Claim 31, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

35. The absorbent article of Claim 31, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.

Sub 49) 36. An absorbent article, comprising:  
(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;  
(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the first stratum comprising first fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising second fibers and a binder; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material;  
and

(d) a liquid impervious backsheet.

37. The absorbent article of Claim 36, wherein the first fibers comprise synthetic fibers.

38. The absorbent article of Claim 36, wherein the second fibers comprise crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

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55. The absorbent article of Claim 54, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

56. The absorbent article of Claim 54, wherein the article is at least one of a feminine care product, an infant diaper, and an adult incontinence product.

57. An absorbent article, comprising:

(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;

(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the first stratum comprising synthetic fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising crosslinked cellulosic fibers and a binder; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material; and

(d) a liquid impervious backsheet.

58. The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the binder is at least one of a bicomponent fiber and a wet strength agent.

59. The absorbent article of Claim 57, wherein the article is at least one of an infant diaper and an adult incontinence product.

60. An absorbent article, comprising:

(a) a liquid pervious topsheet;

(b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first and second strata;

the first stratum comprising synthetic fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising crosslinked cellulosic fibers and a binder; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first and second strata commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material;